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Christmas Shopping Guide

More records around for good giving to family, friends

By JUAN RODRIGUEZ
for The Gazette

Buying records for Christmas gifts is more enjoyable — and more problematic — than ever.

After all, recordings constitute the most popular consumer entertainment industry of all. More discs are today released than ever, offering unprecedented variety. A well-stocked record shop can be a veritable goldmine for the discriminating shopper who seeks to buy "something special" for family and friends. Music is a very personal thing with most people, and the appropriate record can say a lot for one's feelings towards the person receiving it as a gift.

A SUGGESTION

However, first a practical suggestion for those parents buying records for rock-crazed offspring.

It would be advisable to rifle through his or her record collection first, if only to glean some inkling of their particular musical tastes. Christmas is a peak selling time for the record companies, who usually assault December with the latest releases by many of the superstars of the day. Thus, it might be advisable to somehow ask your beloved little rock addict for his/her preferences. You might initiate things discreetly, and with a knowing hipness, by proposing: "Have you got the new Elton John or Linda Rondstadt albums yet?" In other words, keep your eyes peeled towards the "latest releases" counter at the disc dispensary — and pray that the grateful receiver has not already rushed out to buy his idol's latest opus.

NOT FOR ALL

Naturally, not everyone is a rock fan, and it is to those music fans that a thoughtful gift would be most appreciated.

Starting with the youngest music fans, the following suggestions:

Pop-rock star Carole King has put out an album of songs entitled **Really Rosy**, based on the stories of children's writer Maurice Sendak. It's one of the few kids' discs to create an aura through fancy production work and these songs have a magic all their own. Rather than condescend, Carole and Co. take great pains to paint a glowing fantasy world that will fill any child with reveries.

Another rock star to make a classic childrens' record is Harry Nilsson, whose **The Point** (with its needlepoint cover) is a veritable gem. Both rockers are endowed with a childlike sensitivity, which they convey on to magical effect.

OLDER KIDS

For older kids, say from 8 to 12 years old, I am informed by a reliable parent that **"Goofy Greats"**, the TV- advertised K-Tel disc compilation of humorous hit parade hits, is enormously popular with this age bracket. Such songs as Alley Oop, Snoopy & the Red Baron, Abab the Arab, and a host of bubblegum hits, make this a representative laffriot — but clench your smile after you've heard it in the background for the twentieth time around!

As for buying records for parents, there are many reissued discs that illuminate the sounds of the past with greater sound quality than the originals themselves. In particular, vintage performances by some of the legendary big band and swing groups of the 1930s and 1940s, have been re-issued with handsome cover art and copious liner notes. Among the most exciting are the following:

Duke Ellington Presents Ivie Anderson, recorded between 1932 and 1940, featuring honeysweet vocals of over 30 songs, including Mood Indigo, Isn't Love the Strangest Thing and others. Great solos by Johnny Hodges, Ben Webster, Cootie Williams, Joe Nanton, and more.

Count Basie: Super Chief, with Harry James, Lester Young, Billie Holiday and others, and **The Best of Count Basie,** with Buck Clayton, Harry Edison, Jo Jones, Jimmy Rushing, Helen Humes and other greats. Both two-record sets feature the Basie band at its most swinging; the performances are remarkably fresh and alive in these discs.

Charlie Christian's Solo Flight presents the forerunner of electric guitarists burning and bopping with the Benny Goodman outfit, while in **The Greatest Jazz Concert Ever,** recorded in 1953 at Massey Hall in Toronto, the likes of Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Charles Mingus, Max Roach and Bud Powell join forth in groovy communion of bebop.

Then there is the Mercury Jazz Master series, keynoted by the superb Lester Young set, **"Pres" At His Very Best,** recorded in 1943-44 at his prime.

All the abovementioned vintage reissues are readily available at large record store, and not only are they great in the nostalgia sense but they provide a superb introduction to classic swing music to the novice jazz fan.

To those who are not steady "jazz fans", nor classical afficianadoes, the following clear sparkling performances are recommended.

Keith Jarrett's **Koln Concert,** a maestro of modern music in solo piano recital; **Duke's Big 4,** featuring Ellington in a quartet setting, recoreded within a year of his death and still jaunty and classy; Antonio Carlos Jobim's **Stone Flower,** a beautifully recorded effervescent demonstration of Brazilian bosa nova music at its most refined; **My Goal's Beyond,** an acoustic meditative set by guitarist Mahavishnu John McLaughlin; and **Collaboration,** with the Modern Jazz Quartet teaming up with classical guitarist Laurindo Almeida with the highlight being Concerto de Aranjuez.

OFF-BEAT

In the off-beat department: **W. C. Fields On Radio,** with Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy, Don Ameche and the gang. Remarkable barbs and battles from the master iconoclast of comedy. Transcribed from Fields' own hilarious radio shows, this record is chock full of spontaneous gags that'll make the listener break up as much as it did to announcer Ameche.

For real nostalgia buffs, there are two albums worth of old radio themes, entitled **Themes Like Old Times** — 100 in all! A punchy condensation of what the golden age of radio was all about.

Finally, for those who want to get away from it all, attain some semblence of peace in the household, there is the **"Environments"** series of recorded outdoor atmospheres, included birds, rolling waves, forests and perhaps the best, say connoisseurs of such audio environs, two albums recording Dawn and Dusk in New Hope, Pennsylvania.

Fire major hazard during yule season

Newspapers in most cities have reported disastrous home fires, often accompanied by loss of life, in December. The cause usually has been defective or improperly operating heating systems. Serious fires are even more likely to occur during holiday week. The cause then is often carelessness.

The clutter of presents and wrappings, the special decorations in various rooms, and the lighting that makes Christmas week different from any other in the year are all fire hazards. The fact that none of them has been the cause of a fire in the past does not mean that it cannot happen this year in your home.

Scattered about living rooms and family rooms in many homes are not only materials for indoor decoration but also presents that are being wrapped and presents that are being opened. It would take only a few hot ashes, perhaps the dottle from a pipe, a carelessly extinguished cigaret or match falling into the papers or tinsel to start a fire. Therefore, it is worthwhile to gather up and discard as soon as possible odds and ends left over from decoration and torn gift wrappings.

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Package A:
• SONY STR 4036-A AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• 2 RSC 100 Speaker Enclosures
• DUAL CS 18 Automatic Turntable with base, cover & SHURE M-75 magnetic cartridge
Sugg. List ..... $615.
LA PLACE PRICE $379.
Package B:
• SONY STR 4046 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• 2 ACCOUSTIC RESEARCH AR7 Speaker Enclosures
• ACCOUSTIC RESEARCH Turntable with base, cover, & SHURE M91-18 Magnetic Cartridge
Sugg. List ..... $810.
LA PLACE PRICE $459.
Package C:
• SONY STR 7045 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• 2 ACCOUSTIC RESEARCH AR-4 Speaker Enclosures
• BIC Professional Manual Turntable, model 940, compl.
Sugg. List ..... $999.
LA PLACE PRICE $679.
Package D:
• SONY STR 7055 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• RSC Santa Maria II Speaker Enclosures
• DUAL 510 Professional Turntable, compl.
Sugg. List ..... $1299.
LA PLACE PRICE $889.
ONE YEAR WARRANTY

KENWOOD
Package A:
• KENWOOD KR 1400 AM-FM Receiver
• 2 GOODMAN PICKWICK Speaker Enclosures
• KENWOOD KP 1022 Turntable with cartridge
Sugg. List ..... $469.
LA PLACE PRICE $379.
Package B:
• KENWOOD KR 2400 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• 2 AR Speaker Enclosures
• ELAC Miracord 623 Automatic Turntable with base cover & SHURE M-75 magnetic cartridge
Sugg. List ..... $645.
LA PLACE PRICE $459.
Package C:
• KENWOOD KR 5400 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• 2 RSC-300 Speaker Enclosures
• ACCOUSTIC RESEARCH XB-91 Manual Turntable compl.
Sugg. List ..... $969.
LA PLACE PRICE $649.
Package D:
• KENWOOD KA 4006 Power Amplifier
• KENWOOD KT 4007 AM-FM Stereo Tuner
• KENWOOD KD 2033 Automatic Belt Drive Turntable
• 2 RSC 300 Speaker Enclosures
Sugg. List ..... $845.
LA PLACE PRICE $649.
FIVE YEAR WARRANTY

PIONEER
Package A:
• PIONEER PROJECT 300 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• 2 RSC 100 Speaker Enclosures
• DUAL CS 18 automatic turntable with base, cover & magnetic cartridge
Sugg. List ..... $539.
LA PLACE PRICE $379.
Package B:
• PIONEER SX 535 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• GOODMAN PICKWICK Speaker Enclosures
• PIONEER PL 120 manual turntable with base, cover & magnetic cartridge
Sugg. List $634.95
LA PLACE PRICE $459.
Package C:
• PIONEER SX 737 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• DUAL 510 professional turntable
• 2 DYNACO A 25 XL Speaker Enclosures
Sugg. List ..... $1049.
LA PLACE PRICE $779.
Package D:
• PIONEER SX 939 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• DUAL 701 professional direct drive turntable with V-15 SHURE cartridge
• 2 ACCOUSTIC RESEARCH 3A Improved Speaker Enclosures
Sugg. List ..... $2299.
LA PLACE PRICE $1469.
TWO YEAR WARRANTY

SANSUI
Package A:
• SANSUI 441 AM-Fm Multiplex Stereo Receiver
• 2 RSC 110 Speaker Enclosures
• DUAL CS-18 Automatic Turntable with base cover & SHURE magnetic cartridge.
Sugg. List ..... $624.
LA PLACE PRICE $379.
Package B:
• SANSUI 551 AM-FM Multiplex Stereo Receiver
• 2 AR7 Speaker Enclosures
• ELAC Miracord automatic turntable with base cover & SHURE magnetic cartridge
Sugg. List ..... $715.
LA PLACE PRICE $459.
Package C:
• SANSUI 771 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• 2 RSC 300 Speaker Enclosures
• PIONEER PL 120 turntable
Sugg. List ..... $929.
LA PLACE PRICE $589.
Package D:
• SANSUI 661 AM-FM Stereo Receiver
• 2 DYNACO A 25 Speaker Enclosures
• BIC Belt drive turntable, model 980
Sugg. List ..... $999.
LA PLACE PRICE $689.
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